



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2009

House of Representatives

HONORING THE FOUR IMMORTAL CHAPLAINS!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to speak about an important resolution that I have reintroduced that honors the legacy of the Four Immortal Chaplains who sacrificed their lives over 65 years ago. (H. Res. 86)

On February 3, 1943, the U.S. Army Transportation Service troopship *Dorchester* was torpedoed in the North Atlantic by a German submarine. Of the 900 passengers and crew, 597 were military personnel, and four of those men were the ship's chaplains—Methodist chaplain George Lansing Fox, Rabbi Alexander Goode, Dutch Reformed minister Clark V. Poling and John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic priest. Each chaplain distributed life vests as the ship went down and then gave up their own when supply ran out. As the ship went down into the icy waters, survivors in the nearby rafts could see the four chaplains with their arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. According to eyewitnesses, the chaplains were heard offering prayers for the soldiers who had died in the wreckage.

In 1948, a stamp was issued honoring these four chaplains as true examples of "Interfaith in Action." They were

recognized by Congress and the President with a special Medal of Honor for their selfless acts of courage, compassion and faith.

The heroism of these brave men should serve as an example of love for others without regard to race, religion or creed, and an acknowledgment of the potential for human compassion. This message rings true today more than ever!

That is why I have reintroduced a resolution, which remembers the Four Immortal Chaplain and requests the President issue a proclamation calling on the Federal Government, States, localities, and the people of the United States to observe a day in their honor with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

It is important their story of extraordinary faith, courage, and selflessness is heard and should guide the way we live out lives with compassion for others, in the spirit of the four Chaplains. I invite my colleagues to join with me in honoring the Four Immortal Chaplains by supporting this important resolution.